Representations against FDI in tobacco products

3665. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received representations from the Karnataka tobacco farmers on the issue of Foreign Direct Investment in tobacco products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Karnataka tobacco farmers have expressed concern that the multi-national tobacco companies will go back on their assurances after entering into Indian market;

(d) if so, what long term Bank guarantees have Government sought from MNCs interested in entering Indian market through FDI route; and

(e) the details of period of Bank guarantees these MNCs have offered to Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) Government have received representations from various Tobacco Growers Organisations in Karnataka about Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in tobacco products.

(b) and (c) The tobacco growers have expressed concerns about the role of multi-national companies and expressed support to the continuation of the existing FDI policy in the tobacco sector.

(d) No Bank Guarantees are required to be furnished by foreign investors for investment in India in any sector/activity, including the tobacco sector.

(e) Does not arise.

Closed tea gardens

3666. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number and details of closed tea gardens in the country;

(b) their location, the number of workers involved and year of closure;

(c) the time-bound action plan by the Tea Board to re-open these gardens;

(d) whether any action is being taken by Government for giving relief to the workers, affected by the closure;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) As per available information, 33 tea gardens are lying closed, of which 17 are in Kerala, 14 in West Bengal and 2 in Assam. The depressed price situation since mid-1999 coupled with other factors like high cost of production and low prices of tea have affected the viability of tea gardens resulting in the closure/abandonment of some of the tea gardens in the country. The total number of workers affected due to closure is about 31,000.

(c) to (e) A package for rehabilitation of closed tea gardens is being worked out in consultation with concerned Ministries/Departments/ Organisations.

(f) Does not arise.

Extension of Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme

3667. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation regarding the extension of Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme beyond March 31, 2007;

(b) if so, the steps taken to encourage the existing exporters who may be benefited by this extension; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. DEPB scheme has been extended for one year with